

A Peace That Will Last

By Jean Finot

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THE peace which is to follow this war must be real; that is, German lying and the coarse illusions of the past must be eliminated from it. When we resume the normal life of mankind we must be able to do this with the same feeling of security with which the farmer proceeds to gather his harvest, without the smallest fear of malefactors near or far. The economic losses of the Allies will, however, be so considerable that it is necessary from now on to consider the means for diminishing their extent. There will also be principles of right and justice to safeguard. International life will have need of positive sanctions for the most distant future. A criminal from the international point of view should be punished like a common-law criminal. The wars of the past almost ended in despite of sound sense, and in such a way as to encourage spoliating and criminal nations. The invader, if his plan did not succeed, went peacefully home again. A more or less solemn peace guaranteed his impunity and allowed him to wait for a more favorable moment to recoup himself.

Today Europe is divided into two camps, one of which, much stronger than the other, is defending justice against crime. And, if it is impossible to win back again the millions of men killed or maimed, or to make good the losses and the floods of tears, let us at least guarantee the economic situation of all the victims of German aggression. * * *

Who called the tune must pay the piper. The difficulty of a repayment does not by any means create the necessity of renouncing it. This simple and logical principle is equally binding in the international field. The conditions of our life of tomorrow will not be safeguarded until we apply to nations the same principles of loyalty and of justice which we hold obligatory in private life.

Therefore we must go on to the end. The war will heal the evils it has caused. Without a decisive victory it will be impossible to recoup our material losses. The exhaustion of the belligerents will be equivalent to general ruin if one of them does not succeed in imposing *his* peace on his adversaries. * * *

The gross total of expenses for the war on the side of the Allies will reach 300,000,000,000 francs (\$60,000,000,000) at the end of three years of war, the smaller cost at the beginning being balanced by the steadily increasing cost as the war broadens and draws in new combatants. * * *

The Allies will lose a minimum of 6,000,000 to 7,000,000 combatants. Their armed force does not, it is true, represent more than 14,000,000. But this figure will rise to more than 20,000,000 soldiers consecutively while hostilities last. This will be equivalent to a loss in earning power equal to 120,000,000,000 to 140,000,000,000 francs. * * *

The obligation to pay, for long years to come, an indemnity of these dimensions will keep Germany from thinking of new wars. And only under this condition can Europe return to a normal life. One of the reasons which make us believe in the future resurrection is that the nations will be able to lay aside militarism for long years to come. After so drastic a bleeding it would be impossible for them to resume their life of industry if they felt themselves obliged, as in the past, to plunge into costly armaments. They must, therefore, be given absolute security on the side of Germany. The recent past has taught us that the whole world, with the exception of Prussia, was eager to organize international life on the basis of liberty and justice, excluding every possibility of brutal aggression.

Once the German factor is reduced to powerlessness, the dream of peace, which had appeared childish and unrealizable,

will become a possibility which will triumph for a long time to come.

This consideration in itself will render inevitable the establishment of a gigantic indemnity, which will constitute a veritable insurance premium for the peace of tomorrow.

On the other hand, Germany herself, delivered from militarism, will soon restore her prosperity. The civilized nations, without making this their goal, will work for the salvation of Germany. We shall thus have a new Germany, which will become dear to the consciousness of mankind from the moment when she shall have left behind the criminality of her rulers.

Peace thus understood, though it may be hard for Germany, will not mean her disappearance. The Allies, as Mr. Asquith has so well said, "will destroy German militarism without tending in any way to destroy the German Nation." But the arsenal of international law furnishes us with no weapon, other than financial expiation, to prevent a return to savagery.

The fiscal and economic union of the Allies will, besides, prove ineffective against the Teutonic activity and spirit of organization. The Germans will exploit all the fissures in international agreements to push their commerce and industry. Let us even admit that the allied countries will remain closed to them. But they will then establish themselves among neutral nations. With the moral conceptions which allow them to become naturalized with the purpose of betraying the fatherland of their adoption, in the interest of their "symbolic fatherland," they will continue a process of sabotage against the economic revival of the Allies. In this region, also, only financial charges imposed on Germany will safeguard the stability of the world. * * *

We must not, as in the past, abandon the regulation of the accounts between the nations to their rulers, more or less qualified. The treaties of peace, as professional diplomats conceive them, always contain the germs of future wars. Bastard solutions resulting from the non-

understanding of national aspirations and the moral interests which, invisible and unsuspected, move masses of men, render conflicts inevitable. And there is something infinitely humiliating for the dignity of men in the teaching that they will never be able to live without hatreds, spoliations, acts of brigandage. Decidedly it will be necessary to add to the "supposed specialists" in the domain of international affairs the representatives of the best elements of each people, who must influence the decisions of their rulers for the time being. An international peace cannot be improvised. It must be prepared and studied. It must be the result of age-long experience and of a profound understanding of the past and of the present.

And the duration of the war will give ample time to those who are behindhand to reflect on the condition of the world of tomorrow. * * *

The German Government is thus caught in its own snare. Its factitious conquests render its desires unrealizable. The nations of the Allies, united in the same thought and bound by identical aspirations, can sign no peace without having obtained the evacuation of all the territories occupied by the Germans. But, however blind and deceived the German people may be, it will never allow the Kaiser to give them up, after having bled his people white and for long years compromised its prosperity and renown.

A peace of this kind would threaten to provoke, let us be certain of it, a bloody revolution and the final disappearance of the Hohenzollerns. But the all-powerful Kaiser is far less concerned for the future of his people than for his own person and his dynasty.

The abandonment, pure and simple, of the territories temporarily conquered could not, besides, satisfy any of the Allies. The principle of indemnities, which we have already stated, constitutes a condition of elementary justice which the civilized nations cannot put aside.

Before the immensity of the sacrifices which will be entailed even by the most favorable peace Germany will see herself obliged to battle to the last man and the

last mark. We are, therefore, driven to a real war of exhaustion. * * * But Germany is not yet out of breath. Her finances are greatly weakened, her economic life is anæmic, her resources in men are greatly diminished; but she still possesses resources which can prolong her agony during long months, perhaps years. * * *

Therefore the war will go on. * * * The German people, who will continue to be deceived, will be told that it is a question of their destruction instead of the destruction of the Hohenzollern dynasty, its squireens and armed brigands, and will, therefore, believe it necessary to defend with a mystic fervor its unity, which is threatened by no one, its

national soil, which no one wishes to cut up; and its independence, which no one wishes to attack. * * *

Let the hoodwinked Germans allow themselves to be taken in by this subterfuge. The Allies will complete the task they have undertaken.

The mystical malady of the Germans will not fail to prolong the war, bringing greater and greater ruin upon themselves and making heavier the expiation for faults committed.

"Whom the gods will destroy, they first make mad," according to the ancient saying. Thus will be accomplished the words of the Lord:

"They who would be the first, shall be the last."

What Would German Victory Mean?

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A GERMAN victory would not mean that the German institutions of today are just the thing for all the world. It would merely show that German institutions are suitable to the genius of the German people. It would not be a justification of monarchy all over the world; it would not reflect glory on Russian absolutism, which, by the way, is the real despotism. It would not endanger the institutions of other people. A German victory does not mean that Switzerland will cease to be a republic and be governed by a Hohenzollern Prince. It does not put American democracy on trial. The test of American democracy is not European achievements in Europe, but American successes at home and abroad. If American democracy solves its own problems it will be justified and need not fear the competition of foreign institutions.

We want a variety of institutions all over the world, not a dead level uniformity for all people. Nations should stick to their own institutions and develop them according to their own ideas. They need not fear disparagement if different institutions of opposite character flourish

under different circumstances. They ought to give up that mischievous idea, born of mediaeval universalism, that they must impress their own institutions on unwilling neighbors. There is no danger that Germany will be influenced by such ideas and try to do missionary work abroad. Quite apart from the intellectual attitude of the German people, which does not favor such universalism, there are twenty-seven different State Constitutions in the German Empire, three of them republican. Even a victorious peace would not give Germany a free hand to overrun the world.

Such a peace would not bring about very great changes in Europe. The occupied parts of France would be given back; Belgium would be released. Very likely Courland, with a population partly German and partly Lithuanian, would be annexed by Germany. Poland would receive autonomy. Austria would probably permit the resuscitation of a somewhat reduced Serbia, for Hungary does not want the annexation of a further batch of Southern Slavs. Bulgaria would get the greater part of new Serbia; Greece might get a part of Albania; Aus-